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Kudos

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May 11, 2008

First Freedom essay finalist

Megan Mascarenhas, a sophomore at Florida Virtual School in Orlando, is among the top 10 national finalists in the First Freedom Student Competition, an annual essay competition put on by the Council for America's First Freedom.

Megan will receive an honorable mention in the contest, in which more than 2,500 students from public, private, parochial schools and home-schooling regions participated.

The competition challenges students to write a well-researched essay about why religious freedom is important to them as citizens of the U.S. and today's pluralistic world.

Megan is the daughter of Franz and Cynthia Mascarenhas.

Mars Hill award in fine arts

Aimee Bohner of Orlando received the Joe Chris and Donna N. Robertson Award from Mars Hill College in North Carolina during the senior convocation ceremony April 29.

The award recognizes a student with a strong commitment to their chosen field who shows promise in the fine arts and demonstrates service to the arts, Mars Hill College and the community.

Bohner will graduate this month with a degree in musical theater.

She also was recognized as a member of the Alpha Chi Honor Society, which requires students to have a grade-point average in the top 10 percent of the junior and senior classes.

Underwater robotics champs

Edgewater High School's Aquatic Eagles underwater robotics team won first place at the Regional MATE 2008 ROV Competition in April in Tampa. Now the team can compete in the international



competition in San Diego in June.

The team members are James Douberley, captain, Walker Talton, Josh Katz, Seth Baklor, Chris Burgos, Jeff Gambrell and Eddie Crouse. Mary Douberley is the faculty sponsor.

The challenge was to design and build Remotely Operated Vehicles that would work underwater to uncover the mysteries of mid-ocean ridges. Students mounted cameras and a "claw" on their vehicle and monitored and controlled it from a "mission station" offshore.

Edgewater was one of two teams to complete all tasks -- in 11 minutes. The team's robot was made of Gatorade bottles, PVC pipe and other household items.

The Aquatic Eagles team is working to raise money to improve the robot and pay expenses to San Diego.

To contribute an item for consideration in Kudos, mail to Katherine Norris, Orlando Sentinel 633 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32801; fax to 407-420-5350 or e-mail to knorris@orlandosentinel.com. Kudos prints face pictures only. If you submit a photo, make sure it is one you don't need returned.

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